



77W
AF
3627

Appl. No. : 09/518,699
Applicant : Martin S. Berger
Filed : March 3, 2000
Title : System and Method For Promoting
Intellectual Property
TC/A.U. : 3627
Examiner : Andrew J. Rudy
Docket No. : 125446-1001

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING
(37 CFR 1.8a)

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail and in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Anne Ziegler

Anne Ziegler
(Signature of person mailing paper)

Date: *March 22, 2005*

TRANSMITTAL FOR BRIEF ON APPEAL

Pursuant to the Notice of Appeal filed January 24, 2005 in the above-identified patent application, Appellant hereby submits to the Board of Appeals and Interferences the following:

A Brief on Appeal in triplicate; and

A check for \$250 in payment of the fee for the Brief on Appeal.

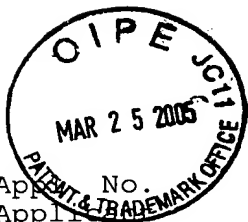
Please charge any fees due or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 07-0153.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: *3/22/05*

Michael E. Martin
Michael E. Martin
Registration No. 24,821
Agent for Applicants

Gardere Wynne Sewell LLP
1601 Elm Street, Suite 3000
Dallas, Texas 75201-4761
Phone (214) 999-4052
Fax (214) 999-3052



App. No. : 09/518,699
Applicant : Martin S. Berger
Filed : March 3, 2000
Title : SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR
: PROMOTING INTELLECTUAL
: PROPERTY
TC/A.U. : 3627
Examiner : ANDREW J. RUDY
Docket No. : 125446-1001

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

<p align="center">CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR 1.8a)</p> <p>I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail and in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.</p> <p align="right">_____ Anne Ziegler</p> <p align="center"><i>(Signature of person mailing paper)</i></p> <p>Date: <u>March 22, 2005</u></p>
--

BRIEF ON APPEAL

Pursuant to a Notice of Appeal in the above-identified patent application filed on January 24, 2005, Appellant in the above-identified patent application submits the following Brief on Appeal.

REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest in the above-identified patent application is the inventor, Martin S. Berger.

RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no related appeals or interferences known to Appellant which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending Appeal.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1 through 42 are currently pending in the above-identified patent application.

Copies of Claims 1 through 42 are attached as an Appendix to this Brief on Appeal.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

An Appeal Brief was filed in this application on July 14, 2003 in response to a final rejection dated January 15, 2003. In response to the filing of the Brief, the final Office Action of January 15, 2003 was withdrawn and an Office Action was issued on October 6, 2003.

A response to the Office Action of October 6, 2003 was filed on January 9, 2004. In a non-final action issued on March 30, 2004, the previous rejection was withdrawn and new rejections under 35 U.S.C. 101 and 35 U.S.C. 103 were issued. Appellant filed a response on June 30, 2004 to the Office Action of March 30, 2004.

An Office Action was issued October 19, 2004. In the Office Action Summary the action was indicated as non-final. However, in the "Detailed Action", such action was indicated to be final. Accordingly, Appellant is treating such Office Action as a final Rejection and this Appeal is being filed pursuant to such action.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention pertains to a method of promoting intellectual property as set forth in Claims 1 and 18, together with the claims dependent thereon, which includes providing a host station with a database describing a plurality of intellectual property items and a description of each item, together with the steps of accessing the database and the description, sending survey information from a consumer station regarding the selected intellectual property item, and accessing the survey information from an industry station to determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the survey information. The invention also pertains to a method of promoting intellectual property online including the steps of viewing at least a general description associated with a selected intellectual property item by a consumer station, selecting the intellectual property item by an industry station and viewing a confidential description of the selected item from the industry station

whereby the confidential description is unavailable for view by the consumer station.

The invention still further is directed to a processor based system for promotion of intellectual property items which includes means for selecting an intellectual property item by a consumer station and an industry station and accessing a description of the selected intellectual property item, together with means for sending feedback data from a consumer station, which includes consumer survey information regarding the selected intellectual property item, and further including means for accessing the feedback data from an industry station to determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item. Still further, the invention pertains to a processor based system which includes means for viewing a general description associated with a selected intellectual property item from a consumer station, means for selecting the intellectual property item by an industry station and means for viewing a confidential description from the industry station whereby the confidential description is unavailable for view by the consumer station.

With reference to the specification, on page 7, and as shown in FIGURE 1, a host station (12) may be an Internet domain whereby plural customer (intellectual property owner) stations (14) and consumer stations (18) may be connected to the host station, and industry stations (16) may be connected to the host station and to a customer station.

As shown in FIGURE 2 and described on page 9, beginning on line 14, the host station (12) includes a public access module (20) which may be connected to the consumer stations (18) and customer stations (14). A private access module (22) is connectable to the customer stations and to industry stations (16). FIGURE 2 illustrates the type of information which may be accessed via a public view module (26) and a private view module (28). Description beginning on page 10, line 4 and with reference to FIGURE 3, indicates the type of information which may be contained in a database (30) related to selected intellectual property items, as denoted in columns 36a through 36n. The database (30) may include such information as a

control number, the type of intellectual property item, its title, its Standard Industrial Classification code, and the name of the "customer" or individual owning the intellectual property item, including address. A general description including an image file name, detailed information, legal status and production status may be included in the database (30) and as described beginning on page 10, line 4 to page 13, line 6.

FIGURE 4 illustrates a search menu (35) showing information items associated with searchable terms that may be part of database (30) and as described on page 11, lines 6 through 17.

A security access level may be assigned to each information item for selectively displaying information on the public view module (26) that is not under a confidentiality agreement whereby, for example, a consumer station may view only general information (36G) in order to render an informed opinion as to the desirability of the product.

FIGURES 5 and 5A illustrate a method (50) for electronically promoting intellectual property which may begin by accessing the host station (12) by one of remote stations such as a customer station (14), an industry station (16) or a consumer station (18) at block (52) in FIGURE 5. The method outlined in the steps shown in FIGURE 5 is described beginning on page 16, line 6. Registration may be required of the remote station or user as indicated at block (54) in FIGURE 5 and FIGURE 7 illustrates the type of registration routine to be performed by the user. Moreover, FIGURE 8 illustrates a menu (80) that prompts the user to enter personal information and which is also described on page 17, line 6 through page 18, line 2.

As described beginning on page 18, line 3 through page 20, line 2, access to the system and using the method of the invention by an industry station requires entry of industry or company data, execution of a confidentiality agreement, and assignment of a PIN.

If the station accessing the host station at block (52) is a customer station, then the steps of determining whether or not it is to be a secret disclosure, entering any invention

information and assignment of a PIN to the customer station takes place as illustrated in FIGURE 5 at blocks (110), (112), (114), (120), (122), (162), (164) and (166), and as described on page 20, line 2 through page 22, line 3.

As further shown in FIGURE 5, once a consumer enters a correct PIN at block (56), the consumer may conduct a search, access the results and complete the survey as described and shown by blocks (172), (174) and (178). The search may be conducted for more than one intellectual property item. Consumer incentive rewards, such as coupons, etc. are described on page 26, line 14. Survey information is acquired via the survey module (40) as described on page 14, line 9, and shown on FIGURE 2 and which may be accessed via both the public view module (26) and the private view module (28).

As further shown in FIGURE 5, if the PIN number entered at block (170) is an industry PIN, then the industry station may conduct a search as shown in FIGURE 5A at block (186), access the results at block (188), indicate interest at block (190) and display and negotiate a transaction as indicated at blocks (192, 194, and 196). A description of the process using the system of the invention which may be accessed by the consumer station begins on page 25, line 1, through page 26, line 21.

If the process involves access by a customer PIN, the customer is given access to all available information associated with the customer's intellectual property as shown at block (184), FIGURE 5, and as described beginning on page 27, line 1 through line 10.

If the PIN entered at block (56) of FIGURE 5 is an industry or customer PIN, the process shown in FIGURE 5A is carried out and as described beginning on page 27, line 1 through page 28, line 19.

The step of summing the survey information collected from the different consumer stations is described on page 25, beginning on line 20. The step of searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature is described beginning on page 11, line 6 and as shown in Figure 4 of the drawings.

Releasing confidential information from a customer station for display on a public view module and releasing such information at the host station is described on page 23, beginning on line 5.

The description of a processor based system and method for promotion of intellectual property including the provision of a host station having an Internet site and at least one database at the Internet site is described on page 4, beginning on line 3. The processor based system which includes the host station, means for selecting one of the intellectual property items by a consumer station and an industry station, means for accessing the description associated with the selected intellectual property item, means for sending feedback data from the consumer station to the host station and means for accessing the feedback data from an industry station is described on page 4, beginning on line 3, and with reference to Figure 2 of the drawings, and as described beginning on page 9, line 14.

ISSUES

The issues presented for review in this appeal are:

whether Claims 1 through 9, 16, 17, 25 through 33 and 40 and 41 are unpatentable because they are directed to non-statutory subject matter, and

whether Claims 1 through 42 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the teaching of U.S. Patent 4,603,232 to Kurland and in view of U.S. Patent 6,233,564 to Shulze, Jr.

GROUPING OF CLAIMS

Appellant considers the rejected claims to be separately patentable and that the claims do not stand or fall together. Appellant presents hereinbelow the reasons why the claims are considered separately patentable.

ARGUMENTS

Each of the independent claims in this application (Claims 1, 18, 25 and 42) is directed to a method or system for promoting intellectual property by permitting access to a computer "host" station by consumers via consumer stations,

which consumers then view selected intellectual property items listed on a database which resides at the host station. Consumers then provide information back to the host station in the way of survey information directed to the desirability of or interest in purchasing the selected intellectual property item.

The method and system further provides for accessing the survey information from an industry station to determine by an industry participant the level of interest in the item by consumers, as indicated by the survey information, so that the industry participant can determine whether or not there is any encouragement to manufacture and sell the item after obtaining a license to do so. The method and system set forth in the independent claims is believed to be unique and unobvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of processor based systems or methods for determining consumer interest in an intellectual property item, and providing access by an industry entity to determine the level of interest and the possibility of obtaining a license to manufacture and sell selected intellectual property items.

In the Office Action the Examiner rejected Claims 1 through 9, 16, 17, 25 through 33 and 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. In the Office Action, the Examiner set forth the basis of the rejection stating that the recited steps of promoting intellectual property do not apply, involve, use or advance the technological arts, since all of the recited steps can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper.

Claim 1 recites the steps of providing a host station having at least one database, the database including plural intellectual property items and a description of each item. Claim 1 further recites the step of accessing the database and selecting an intellectual property item by a consumer station, then accessing the description associated with the intellectual property item, then sending survey information from a consumer station to the host station and then accessing the survey information from an industry station to determine the interest in the selected intellectual property item. Appellant respectfully submits these steps are not capable of being

carried out in the mind of the user of the method nor by use of pencil and paper. The step of providing a host station having a database is clearly a physical act. The steps of accessing databases and descriptive information and survey information, and sending survey information, are also clearly activities which cannot be performed in the mind of the user. Moreover, even if such steps were capable of being performed by the use of a pencil and paper, such activity is clearly within the realm of statutory subject matter as set forth by the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101. The steps required in Claim 1 are clearly within the requirements of invention of a new and useful process as required by the statute.

With regard to Claims 2 through 9, 16 and 17, all depending directly or indirectly from Claim 1, these claims modify the steps set forth in Claim 1 or provide for further steps in the process required by Claim 1 and clearly fall within the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101.

With regard to Claims 25 through 33, independent Claim 25 recites a processor based system including a host station, means for selecting an intellectual property item, means for accessing a description associated with the selected intellectual property item, means for sending feedback data and means for accessing the feedback data. Claim 25 clearly sets forth a combination of elements, some of which are recited in means plus function form, which clearly satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101.

With regard to Claims 26 through 33, these claims depend directly or indirectly from Claim 25 and either further define the elements set forth in the system of Claim 25 or add additional elements to the overall combination of elements set forth in Claim 25. Appellant respectfully submits that the recitation of elements in the claims depending from Claim 25, as well as the recitation of elements in Claim 25, expressed as a means for performing a specified function, are clearly within the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101.

With regard to Claims 40 and 41, which also depend from Claim 25, these two claims further define elements set forth in Claim 25 including the requirements of the description of each intellectual property item, as set forth in Claim 40, and the

additional recitation in Claim 41 of means for selectively releasing at least one confidential information item.

Appellant respectfully submits that all of the claims pending in this application meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101 and requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 101 be reversed.

In the Office Action dated October 19, 2004, the Examiner rejected Claims 1 through 42 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the teaching of U.S. Patent 4,603,232 to Kurland in view of U.S. Patent 6,233,564 to Schulze, Jr. The Examiner has stated that to have provided interest to buy a "selected intellectual property item" based upon survey information for the selected items of the Kurland reference would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the teaching of the Schulze, Jr. reference. Reconsideration for allowance of Claims 1 through 42 is requested.

With regard to the teaching of the Kurland reference, this patent discloses a market survey data collection and survey dissemination method wherein various panelists or consumer stations (14, 16, 18, 20) are utilized to conduct a survey, the data for which is transmitted to a host computer (12). Kurland does not describe the particular type of market survey information to be conducted and makes no suggestion with respect to the provision of a plurality of intellectual property items on a database, each including a description of the item. Still further, the Kurland reference does not disclose or suggest the provision of an industry station or the step of accessing the survey information from the industry station to determine the level of interest by potential consumers in certain ones of the intellectual property items residing on the host station, all as required by Appellant's Claim 1.

With regard to the teaching of the Schulze, Jr. reference, this patent is directed to a system which utilizes plural data gathering networks and wherein the obtained data is stored in a common database that is accessible for providing information about consumers in connection with targeting consumers for the purchase of certain products or services. There is no

suggestion in Schulze, Jr. to provide an industry station which may access a database on a host station which stores information regarding plural intellectual property items, nor is there any suggestion to provide for accessing survey information from the so-called industry station to determine the level of interest in selected intellectual property items as determined by survey information. In at least these respects, Claim 1 is believed to distinguish over the teaching of Kurland and Schulze, Jr.

With regard to Claims 2 through 17, which depend from and further define or restrict Claim 1, Appellant respectfully submits that the overall combination of steps set forth in Claim 2 of summing the survey information from different stations for a selected intellectual property item is not suggested by the art of record.

With regard to Claim 3, the step of including information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item in combination with the steps of Claims 1 and 2, is also not suggested by Kurland or Schulze, Jr.

With regard to Claim 4, the step of including information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item in combination with the steps of Claim 1 is also not made obvious by the art of record.

With regard to Claims 5 and 6, the steps of providing an incentive to a consumer at the consumer station for sending the survey information, together with the steps of Claims 1 and 4, is not suggested by the prior art nor is the step of providing the incentive to be chosen from a group consisting of currency, coupons, discounts, products and services as set forth in the step of Claim 6.

With regard to Claims 7 and 8, the step of searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature, together with the steps of Claim 1 is not suggested by Kurland or Schulze, Jr., nor is the common feature to be one of the Standard Industrial Classification Code or North American Industry Classification System Code as required by Claim 8.

With regard to Claim 9, the steps of sending intellectual property data from a customer station to a host station

representative of an intellectual property item at least partially held by a customer, the intellectual property data being included in at least the one database and comprising at least the description of the intellectual property item, followed by displaying at least the description of the item at the host station are all steps which, together with the steps of Claim 1 are clearly not disclosed or suggested by Kurland in view of Schulze, Jr.

Still further, with regard to Claim 10, the overall method of Claims 1, 9 and 10 wherein the host station includes an Internet site and wherein each of the consumer, industry and customer stations include a processor based workstation remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto is clearly not suggested by the prior art.

With regard to Claims 11 through 14, the prior art does not suggest the provision in Claim 11 of making the survey information accessible at the Internet site by only the customer station and the industry station, respectively, nor the method in Claim 12 wherein the at least one database comprises at least one confidential information item, nor further wherein, in Claim 13, the one confidential information item is viewable only by the customer station which is at least partially holding the intellectual property item, nor still further, in Claim 14, wherein the step of selectively releasing from the customer station the at least one confidential information item for view by the consumer station. Appellant respectfully submits that none of these steps, taking into consideration the limitations of Claims 1, 9 and 10, are made obvious or suggested by Kurland and/or Schulze, Jr. taken alone or one modified in view of the other.

With regard to Claims 16 and 17, the steps in Claim 16 of providing a description of each intellectual property item to include at least one general information item viewable by the consumer station and at least one confidential information item viewable by an industry station is not disclosed in or suggested by the prior art. Still further, with regard to Claim 17, the step of selectively releasing the at least one confidential information item at the host station for view by the consumer

station is, again, a step which is not found in the prior art of record, nor suggested by such art.

The method set forth in Claim 18 and the claims dependent thereon is believed to distinguish patentably over the teaching of Kurland as modified by Schulze, Jr. Neither of these references suggest a method of promoting intellectual property online by providing a host station including a database with a plurality of intellectual property items, a description of each item and at least one confidential description item associated with each description of each intellectual property item. Still further, neither of the references taken alone or in combination, suggest the steps of selecting an intellectual property item by an industry station connected to a host station and viewing at least one confidential description item from the industry station whereby the at least one confidential description item is unavailable for view by the consumer station. Neither Kurland nor Schulze, Jr. suggest a system or process involving steps of providing a confidential description item and viewing the confidential description item from an industry station.

Claims 19 through 24 refer back to and further restrict Claim 18 and are believed to be patentable at least for the reasons set forth in support of the patentability of Claim 18. With regard to Claim 19, neither Kurland nor Schulze, Jr. suggest sending feedback data on the selected intellectual property item from a consumer station to a host station and then providing for accessing the feedback data from an industry station to determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the consumer survey information.

With regard to Claim 20, dependent on Claim 19, neither Kurland nor Schulze, Jr. suggest the step of including information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase a selected intellectual property item within the consumer survey information. Claim 21 is believed to distinguish patentably at least for these reasons and for the reason that neither Kurland nor Schulze, Jr. suggest the step of providing an incentive to a consumer at the consumer station for sending the feedback data.

Claims 22 and 23 are not believed to be made obvious by the prior art taken in combination with Claim 18 wherein, in Claim 22, the steps of providing for searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items by the industry station, the items having at least one common feature and wherein the feature as set forth in Claim 23 is one of a Standard Industrial Classification Code and a North American Industry Classification System code.

With regard to Claim 24, the step of selectively releasing at least one confidential description item at the host station for view by a consumer station is not suggested by the references of record taken together with the steps of Claim 18, in particular.

With regard to Claim 25, and the claims dependent thereon, Appellant respectfully submits that neither Kurland nor Schulze, Jr. disclose or suggest a processor based system for promotion of intellectual property, including a host station together with means for selecting an intellectual property item stored on the host station or a description associated with the selected intellectual property item. In particular, neither reference discloses or suggests means for accessing feedback data from an industry station to determine a degree of consumer interest in a selected intellectual property item for which data has been fed back from a consumer station to a host station.

Claims 26 through 41 refer back to and further restrict Claim 25 and are believed to be patentable at least for the reasons set forth above in support of the patentability of Claim 25 and for reasons previously stated with respect to dependent Claims 2 through 17 and 19 through 24.

The processor based system for promotion of intellectual property as set forth in Claim 42 is believed to be patentably distinguishable over the teaching of Kurland as modified by Schulze, Jr. or vice versa. As pointed out with respect to the patentability of Claim 18, neither Kurland nor Schulze, Jr. suggest storing a description of an intellectual property item on a host station and wherein the description includes at least one general description item and at least one confidential description item. Neither Kurland nor Schulze, Jr. disclose or

suggest means for viewing at least one confidential description item of a selected intellectual property item from an industry station so that at least one confidential description item associated with an intellectual property item is unavailable for view by a consumer station.

Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner has erred in rejecting the claims pending in this application and that Claims 1 through 42, as presented for consideration on appeal, are allowable and should be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 3/22/05

Michael E. Martin
Michael E. Martin
Registration No. 24,821
Agent for Appellant

Gardere Wynne Sewell LLP
1601 Elm Street, Suite 3000
Dallas, Texas 75201-4761
Phone (214) 999-4052
Fax (214) 999-3052

APPENDIX TO BRIEF ON APPEAL

1. A method of promoting intellectual property, the method comprising:

 providing a host station having at least one database, the at least one database including:

 a plurality of intellectual property items; and
 a description of each intellectual property item;

 accessing said database and selecting one of said intellectual property items by a consumer station;

 accessing the description associated with the selected intellectual property item from the consumer station;

 sending survey information from the consumer station to the host station, the survey information of the selected intellectual property item based at least in part on the description of the selected intellectual property item; and

 accessing the survey information from an industry station to thereby determine the interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the survey information.

2. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, and further comprising summing the survey information from different stations for the selected intellectual property item.

3. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 2, wherein the survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

4. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, wherein the survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

5. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 4, and further comprising providing an incentive to a consumer at the consumer station for sending the survey information.

6. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 5, wherein the incentive is chosen from the group consisting of currency, coupons, discounts, products, and services.

7. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, and further comprising searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature prior to selecting the at least one intellectual property item.

8. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 7, wherein the at least one common feature is one of a Standard Industrial Classification code and a North American Industry Classification System code.

9. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, and further comprising:

sending from a customer station to a host station intellectual property data representative of an intellectual property item at least partially held by a customer at the customer station, the intellectual property data being included in the at least one database and comprising at least the description of the customer's intellectual property item; and

displaying at least the description of the customer's intellectual property item at the host station for view by the consumer and industry stations upon selection of the customer's intellectual property item.

10. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 9, wherein the host station includes an Internet site, and further wherein each of the consumer, industry, and customer stations includes a processor-based work station remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the at least one database.

11. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 10, wherein the survey information is accessible at the Internet site by only the customer station and the industry station, respectively.

12. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 11, wherein the at least one database further comprises at least one confidential information item for the selected intellectual property item.

13. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 12, wherein the at least one confidential information item is viewable only by the customer station at least partially holding the intellectual property item and by the industry station.

14. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 13, and further comprising selectively releasing, from the customer station, the at least one confidential information item for view by the consumer station.

15. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, wherein the host station includes an Internet site, and further wherein each of the consumer and industry stations includes a processor-based work station remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the at least one database.

16. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, wherein the description of each intellectual property item includes at least one general information item viewable by at least the consumer station and at least one confidential information item viewable by the industry station.

17. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 16, and further comprising selectively releasing the at least one confidential information item at the host station for view by the consumer station.

18. A method of promoting intellectual property online, the method comprising:

- providing a host station having an Internet site and at least one database accessible at the Internet site, the at least one database including:

 - a plurality of intellectual property items; and

 - a description of each intellectual property item, the description having at least one general description item and at least one confidential description item;

- selecting one of said intellectual property items by a consumer station connected to the host station;

- viewing the at least one general description item associated with the selected intellectual property item from the consumer station;

- selecting said one intellectual property item by an industry station connected to the host station; and

- viewing the at least one confidential description item from the industry station;

- whereby said at least one confidential description item is unavailable for view by the consumer station.

19. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 18, and further comprising:

- sending feedback data on the selected intellectual property item from the consumer station to the host station, the feedback data including consumer survey information of the intellectual property item based at least in part on the description of the associated intellectual property item; and

- accessing the feedback data from the industry station to thereby determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the consumer survey information.

20. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 19, wherein the consumer survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

21. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 20, and further comprising providing an incentive to a consumer at the consumer station for sending the feedback data.

22. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 18, and further comprising searching, by said industry station, a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature prior to selecting by said industry station the at least one intellectual property item.

23. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 22, wherein the at least one common feature is one of a Standard Industrial Classification code and a North American Industry Classification System code.

24. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 18, and further comprising selectively releasing the at least one confidential description item at the host station for view by the consumer station.

25. A processor-based system for promotion of intellectual property, the system comprising:

a host station having at least one database, the at least one database including:

a plurality of intellectual property items; and

a description of each intellectual property item;

means for selecting one of said intellectual property items by a consumer station and an industry station, respectively;

means for accessing the description associated with the selected intellectual property item from said consumer station and said industry station;

means for sending feedback data from the consumer station to the host station, the feedback data including consumer survey information of the selected intellectual property item based at least in part on the description of the selected intellectual property item; and

means for accessing the feedback data from an industry station to thereby determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the consumer survey information.

26. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, and further comprising means for summing the consumer survey information from different consumer stations for the selected intellectual property item.

27. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 26, wherein the consumer survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

28. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, wherein the consumer survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

29. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 28, and further comprising means for providing an incentive to a consumer at the consumer station for sending the feedback data.

30. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 29, wherein the incentive is chosen from the group consisting of currency, coupons, discounts, products, and services.

31. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, and further comprising means for searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature prior to selecting the at least one intellectual property item.

32. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 31, wherein the at least one common feature is one of a Standard Industrial Classification code and a North American Industry Classification System code.

33. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, and further comprising:

means for sending from a customer station to a host station intellectual property data representative of an intellectual property item at least partially held by a customer at the customer station, the intellectual property data being included in the at least one database and comprising at least a description of the intellectual property item; and

means for displaying at least the description of the intellectual property item at the host station for view by the consumer station and the industry station, respectively.

34. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 33, wherein the host station includes an Internet site, and further wherein each of the consumer station, the industry station, and the customer station includes a processor-based work station remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the at least one database.

35. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 34, wherein the feedback data is accessible at the Internet site by only the customer station and the industry station, respectively.

36. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 35, wherein the at least one database further comprises at least one confidential information item for at least one of the intellectual property items.

37. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 36, wherein the system includes means operable whereby the at least one confidential information item is viewable only by the customer station at least partially holding the intellectual property item and by the industry station.

38. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 37, and further comprising means for selectively releasing, from the customer station, the at least one confidential information item for view by the consumer station.

39. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, wherein the host station includes an Internet site, and further wherein each of the consumer and industry stations includes a processor-based work station remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the at least one database.

40. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, wherein the description of each intellectual property item includes at least one general information item viewable by at least the consumer station and at least one confidential information item viewable by the industry station.

41. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 40, and further comprising means for selectively releasing the at least one confidential information item at the host station for view by the consumer station.

42. A processor-based system for promotion of intellectual property, the system comprising:

- a host station having an Internet site and at least one database accessible at the Internet site, the at least one database including:

- a plurality of intellectual property items; and

- a description of each intellectual property item, the description having at least one general description item and at least one confidential description item;

- means for selecting one of said intellectual property items by a consumer station connected to the host station;

- means for viewing the at least one general description item associated with the selected intellectual property item from the consumer station;

- means for selecting said one intellectual property item by an industry station connected to the host station; and

- means for viewing the at least one confidential description item from the industry station;

- whereby said at least one confidential description item is unavailable for view by the consumer station.